Management lessons in the Mahabharata and Bhagvad Gita

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Introduction to Ved Vyasa

- Veda Vyasa, also known as Vyasa or Krishna Dvaipayana, is a revered sage and an important figure in Hindu traditions:
- **Known for**: He is credited with composing or compiling the Mahabharata, the Vedas, and the Puranas. He is also considered to be the compiler of the mantras of the Vedas into four texts.
- **Birthplace**: According to legend, Vyasa was born to the ascetic Parashara and the princess Satyavati, and grew up in the forests.
- **Life**: He lived in the forests near the Sarasvati river, where he became a teacher and priest. He is said to have divided the Vedas into four collections, composed the Puranas, and dictated the Mahabharata to the elephant god Ganesha.
- **Incarnation**: Many Hindus believe that Vyasa is a partial incarnation of Vishnu.
- **Immortality**: He is considered to be one of the seven Chiranjivins, or immortals, who are still alive in the current age.
- **Festival**: His birthday is celebrated as Guru Purnima, which is also known as Vyasa Purnima.
- **Beliefs**: He is believed to live in seclusion somewhere in the Himalayas.

Introduction to Mahabharata Epic

- The Mahabharata is an ancient Indian epic poem that tells the story of a war between two groups of cousins, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, for the throne of Hastinapura:
- **What it is:** The Mahabharata is a Sanskrit epic poem that's considered one of the most important texts of ancient Indian literature. It's made up of almost 100,000 couplets, divided into 18 sections, and also includes the Bhagavad Gita.
- **What it's about:** The Mahabharata is a story of good versus evil, with the Kauravas and the Pandavas representing demons and gods, respectively. It includes the events leading up to, during, and after the Battle of Kurukshetra, as well as Hindu history, religion, and philosophy.
- **Who wrote it:** The Mahabharata is traditionally attributed to the sage Vyasa, who appears in the work as the grandfather of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. However, it's unlikely that any single person wrote the poem.
- **When it was written:** The Mahabharata is generally thought to have been composed in the 4th century BCE or earlier, and appeared in its present form around 400 CE.
- **What it means:** The title of the Mahabharata translates to "Great Bharat (India)", or "the story of the great descendents of Bharata", or as "The Great Indian Tale".
- **What it's used for:** Hindus regard the Mahabharata as both a text about dharma (Hindu moral law) and a history (itihasa). Some say it imparts a dark, nuanced moral vision.

Brahman

- Brahman is the ultimate reality, the supreme God, and the true essence of all existence. It's also known as the divine consciousness, and is considered to be a universal spirit that is eternal and unchanging.
- **Pervasive**: Brahman is present throughout the universe.
- **Infinite**: Brahman is infinite and eternal.
- **Non-physical**: Brahman is non-physical, and is the cause of all changes.
- **Binding unity**: Brahman is the single binding unity that exists behind the diversity of all things.
- **Related to atman**: Brahman is related to the Hindu concept of atman, which is the soul or self. Each person is connected to Brahman, and carries a part of Brahman within them, known as the atman.

Atman

- **Meaning:** Atman is a Sanskrit word that means "soul" or "breath". It refers to the innermost nature of each living being, which is pure and unchanged.
- **Concept:** Atman is considered to be eternal and everlasting, and is part of the spirit of Brahman, the absolute reality. It is the unchanging, radiant self that is unaffected by personality or ego.
- **Importance:** The life task of each person is to discover atman within themselves. The ultimate goal of Hindu religious life is to transcend individuality and realize one's true nature.
- **After death:** After death, atman either transmigrates to a new life or attains release (moksha) from the bonds of existence.

Jivatma

- In Hinduism, the jivatma is the individual soul, or the manifestation of the atma in a living being
- **Definition:** The jivatma is the individual being that contains the atma. The jivatma is born and dies, but the atma is not bound by birth and death.
- **Relationship to the atma:** The atma is the "I-awareness" that lives in every living being. The atma is part of the paramatma, the Supreme Principle, and is identical in nature with it. The jivatma is a reflection of the atma within an individual.
- **Relationship to the sarira:** The jivatma is associated with the sarira, which gives the jivatma awareness of the world. The atma leaves the body to take another sarira according to its karma.
- **Goal of Yoga:** The goal of the path of Yoga is to dispel the illusion of identifying with the attributes of the body, mind, and thoughts, and to return to the unity of the atma.

Moksha

- Moksha is a concept in Hinduism and Jainism that means liberation from the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. It is the ultimate goal of a Hindu practitioner and is also known as nirvana. The word moksha comes from the Sanskrit word muc, which means "to free".
- Moksha can be achieved in this life or after death. Some ways to achieve moksha include:
  - Overcoming ignorance
  - Overcoming desires
  - Entering the Divine's abode, such as Vishnu loka, Shiv loka, and Durga loka
  - Removing the veil of ignorance and knowing the real Self
- According to the Bhagavad Gita, there are four paths to moksha, or liberation, that are suitable for different personality types:
  - **Jnana yoga**: The path of knowledge
  - **Bhakti yoga**: The path of devotion
  - **Karma yoga**: The path of action
  - **Raja yoga**: The path of meditation

Prakriti and Gunas

- In the Bhagavad Gita, prakriti is the material source of creation, and the three gunas are the fundamental forces that make up prakriti.
- **Prakriti:** The unseen force that is the source of all action and being, from the universe to atomic particles.
- **Gunas:** The three fundamental forces that make up prakriti:
  - **Sattva**: The quality of goodness, light, and harmony. It is associated with positive emotions and a desire for knowledge.
  - **Rajas**: The quality of energy, activity, and passion. It can have a supportive or hindering effect on the evolution of the soul.
  - **Tamas**: The quality of inertia, darkness, and insensitivity. Souls who are more Tamasic are considered imbued in darkness and take the longest to reach liberation.

Ishwar

- Brahman Creates = GOD (Ishwar)
  - He generates what happens in our every day lives; He plans it all, and He knows what will happen to us in the future. **Brahma**
  - He is the operator which means he operates how the universe works. Sometimes things don't work out and sometimes they do. That's God's decision. We should accept His will without exception. **Vishnu**
  - He is also the destroyer. Some people may take that as a negative aspect, but it really isn't, because whenever God takes something away, he's just making room for something better. **Shiv**
- Ishvara = Reflected Awareness + Maya Shakti.
- Maya Shakti= Saraswati+ Lakshmi+ Parvati

Avatara

- In the Bhagavad Gita, an avatar is a divine incarnation of a deity in human, animal, or humanoid form that descends to Earth to accomplish a specific goal:
- **Purpose**: To protect sadhus, destroy the wicked, and establish dharma

24 incarnation of Lord Vishnu

24 incarnation of Lord Vishnu

1. **Adi Purush** – Primary avatar of Lord Vishnu
2. **Four Kumars** – First four conscious beings created by Lord Brahma (**Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, Sanatkumara)**
3. **Narada**– Narada is the son of Lord Bramha and is a big devotee of Lord Vishnu.
4. **Nara Narayana** – Nara and Narayana are the two twin sage avatars of Lord Vishnu.
5. **Kapila**– Kapila is described as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu
6. **Dattatreya**– Dattatreya is the God who is an incarnation of the Divine Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Siva
7. **Yajna-** a ritual where the fire is lighted and sacrifice is made to make wishes to the deities
8. **Rishabha**– Rishabha was a preacher and a spiritual leader
9. **Prithu**– Prithu was the first sacred king
10. **Dhanvantari-** Dhanvantari-Dhanavantari is the god who emerged, holding a pot of Amrit in his hand
11. **Mohini**– Mohini is a female avatar of Vishnu.
12. **Hayagreeva**– He has a fair man's body, with the head of a horse.
13. **Vyasa-** He authored Mahabharata.
14. **Matsya**– Matsya is known to ve the half fish, and a half-human form of Lord Vishnu.
15. **Kurma**– Kurma is the half tortoise half-man form of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu took the Kurma avatar during the Samudramanthan (churning of the ocean).
16. **Varaha** – Varaha is the half man and half boar avatar of Vishnu
17. **Narsimha** – Narsimha is the half lion and a half-human avatar of Vishnu.
18. Vamana- This avatar of Lord Vishnu comes to check the growing power of the demonic king Mahabali,
19. **Parshuram** – He is depicted as a sage with an axe in his hand.
20. **Rama** – **Ram** assumes an earthly form (**avatar**) to defeat the wicked and protect his devotees.
21. **Balrama** – Balarama appears in Mahabharata as the elder brother of Krishna
22. **Balram & Krishna –** Lord Vishnu incarnated as Balram & Krishna killed many demons and evil kings in the nearby kingdoms, to his birthplace.
23. **Buddha** – Adopting **Buddha** into the Hindu pantheon was a way of trying to neutralize the popularity of **Buddhism**.
24. **Kalki**– Kalki is the only avatar of Vishnu that is yet to be born.

THE 19 AVATARS OF LORD SHIVA

1. Piplaad Avatar
2. Nandi Avatar
3. Veerbhadra Avatar
4. Sharabha Avatar
5. Ashwatthama
6. Bhairava Avatar
7. Durvasa Avatar
8. Grihapati Avatar
9. Lord Hanuman
10. Vrishabha Avatar
11. Yatinath Avatar
12. Krishna Darshan Avatar
13. Bhikshuvarya Avatar
14. Sureshwar Avatar
15. Kirateshwar Avatar
16. Suntantarka Avatar
17. Brahmachari Avatar
18. Yaksheshwar Avatar
19. Avadhut Avatar

Administrative Lessons from the Mahabharata

- **Hierarchical Structure:** The Mahabharata illustrates a clear hierarchical administrative structure, with the king at the top, supported by ministers, advisors, and other officials. This hierarchy ensured order and a clear chain of command, crucial for decision-making and implementation.
- **Council of Ministers:** The concept of a council of ministers is prominent in the Mahabharata. Kings like Yudhishthira relied on their ministers for counsel and assistance in governance, showcasing the importance of collective decision-making and expert advice.
- **Rule of Law:** The Mahabharata emphasizes dharma (righteousness) as the guiding principle of governance. Leaders were expected to uphold justice and fairness, underscoring the rule of law as a cornerstone of effective administration.
- **Strategic Planning and Warfare:** The epic details meticulous planning and strategy in warfare, which can be likened to modern strategic management. The Pandavas and Kauravas both employed detailed plans, intelligence gathering, and resource management, reflecting advanced administrative capabilities.
- **Diplomacy and Alliances:** Forming alliances and engaging in diplomacy were crucial administrative strategies. The alliances forged by Krishna, for instance, were pivotal in determining the war's outcome, illustrating the importance of relationship management and diplomacy.

Vidur Neeti

- A man is not born wise, his habits, decisions, and personality make them wise. They focus on sticking to the righteous path of Dharma.
- A wise man should remain unaffected by happiness, sadness, pride & victory, and willfulness.
- A man who doesn’t take pride in being honored and grieves for being insulted, he has been calm like the holy river Ganga is reckoned as a truly educated one.
- A man should be always in the accompany of good and wise persons.
- The man who knows the nature of all creatures, to be merciful to all living beings must not harm the creations of the god, is reckoned as wise and he should pray to the almighty for the prosperity of all the living beings in the world.
- A man should treat all females with great respect as their sisters and mothers, and they have to serve as guardians to them.
- A wise man, who speaks boldly in all situations, can converse on various subjects, is good at debate, and explains his point in very little time.

1. Leadership is not only about power but an ability to empower others

Guided Pandavas through their tough times

Reminded Pandavas of their duty and their objective of life.

1. Leadership is not only about power but an ability to empower others

GUIDANCE

SUPPORT

MOTIVATION

1. Leadership is not only about power but an ability to empower others

Every organization needs a leader like Krishna of Mahabharata.

A great leader :

1. Organise
2. Strategise &
3. Manage People efficiently

1. Leadership is not only about power but an ability to empower others

Steve Jobs

N. R. Narayana Murthy

Ratan Tata

Leaders are the ones who make the company step towards success in difficult times

2. Strategy means utilizing the right tool (or person) at the right time

It's not about having the best :

People

Material

System

Process

It's about using them :

At the right time

In the right way

STRATEGY

2. Strategy means utilizing the right tool (or person) at the right time

During war, Abhimanyu and Ghatotkacha both died.

However, they served a greater purpose.

2. Strategy means utilizing the right tool (or person) at the right time

Lord Krishna wanted Ghatotkach to fight with Karna.

So in order to stop Ghatotkach, Karna had no option but to use his only Shakti Astra which he had kept to use on Arjuna.

2. Strategy means utilizing the right tool (or person) at the right time

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Kaurava Sena violated all the decided laws of war in order to kill Abhimanyu.

Lord Krishna wanted Pandavas to see this and break these very laws to kill Dronacharya, Karna & Duryodhana.

2. Strategy means utilizing the right tool (or person) at the right time

3. A good mentor is worth an entire army

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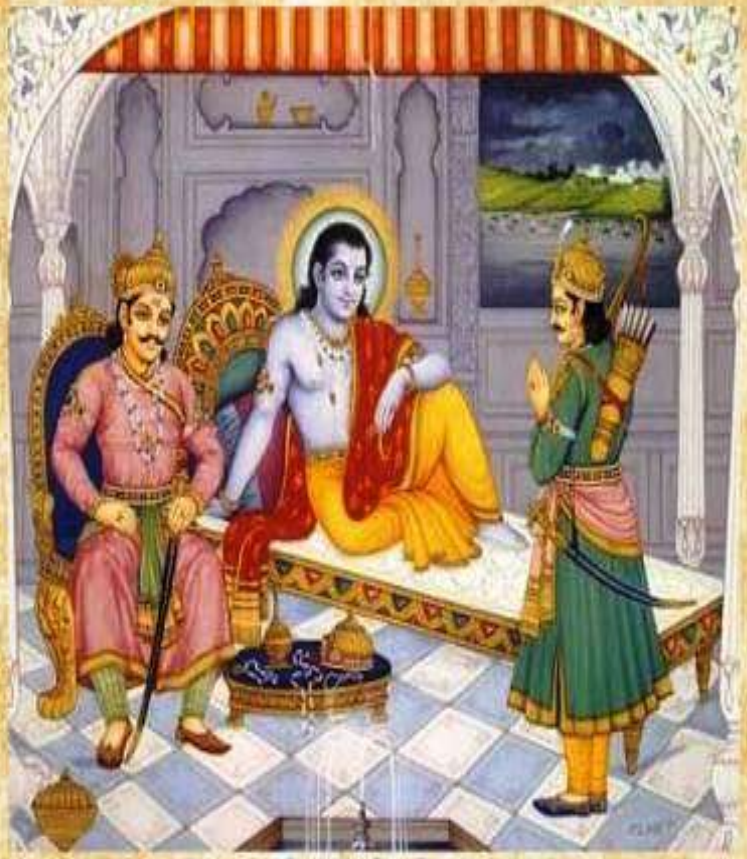
Supreme army without an efficient leader

OR

A mentor or leader who could guide you through all kinds of problems

3. A good mentor is worth an entire army

1. Either have my large Narayani Sena



2. Or have me on your side (but I will not pick arms in the war)

Lord Krishna to
Duryodhana & Arjuna

3. A good mentor is worth an entire army

Duryodhana chose Lord Krishna's large Narayani Sena.

Arjuna chose Lord Krishna .

He needed Lord Krishna as a :

Guide Friend

Mentor Philosopher

4. Neglect None

Nakula was known for his expertise in medicine.

Sahadeva was known for his expertise in astrology.

They treated all injured soldiers and healed their wounds.

Beacuse of their continuous support, their army was able to sustain on the battlefield against huge Kaurava Sena.

4. Neglect None

Each department has their own role to play in building a healthy & growing organization and in the market.

Companies should give equal importance to all their departments.

Management principles from Mahabharat

- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Utilization of available resources
- Work Commitment
- Motivation
- Work Culture
- Work Results
- Accountability

Duty is sacrosanct

- Perform your duty even if it means going against your beloved ones is the message of Krishna to Arjuna

Respect inherent dignity of every human being

- A kingdom/society which violates human dignity is bound to decimate. Kaurvas act of tampering with the dignity of Draupadi decimated the whole Kaurvas

Uphold Dharma & Truth

- Life of Yudhistira is an epitome of truth & Dharma. it symbolises that Dharma needs to be upholded even if it means loosing the war

War is bound to cause misery & destruction for millions of years to come

- Even fought for a just cause, war is full of destruction & thus, in a way Mahabharata teaches the importance of diplomacy

Teacher is equivalent to Good

- Even standing on the opposite side of battle, Arjuna first payed respect to his teacher.

Immoral means like corruption, cheating only provides momentary gains

- In long-terms truth always becomes victorious as exemplified by victory of Pandavas over Kauravas